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PERSIA AND THE PERSIANS.

BY

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Your attention is invited to a consideration of some of the leading points of interest in the remote and ancient empire of Persia. Remote as that land appears to us on this side of the Atlantic, and amid the active, energetic scenes in which we live, yet its past history is so inwrought with the march of civilization that all of us are familiar with the name of Persia, and all have the vague idea that it still represents, in concrete form, the customs and the splendor recorded in the magical tales of the "Arabian Nights." The cultivated imagination kindles at the mention of Persia. The names of Cyrus, of Darius, of Xerxes, are household words. Every school-boy has pored over the narrative of the invasion of Greece by the mighty hosts and armaments of Persia. But it is difficult to realize that the nation, founded and ruled by those sovereigns centuries before Christ, is still a living power inspired by a continuous vitality that may suffice to preserve her national independence for ages to come. She had already developed a distinct civilization and an extraordinary genius for political organization before the star of Rome had begun to cast its rays above the horizon of history. The immortal portals of Persepolis were reared ages before the Parthenon of Athens, and are still among the most remarkable rivals of the architectural triumphs of

ancient Greece of which antiquity has left us the remains. Although shorn of some of her vast territorial possessions, which have at various times extended from the Ganges to the Nile, and from the Don to the Indian Ocean, Persia is yet by no means an insignificant power. Her limits include more than the area of France and Germany combined, while the intellectual vigor of her people, after the lapse of nearly three thousand years, shows few signs of degeneracy. It is true that for several generations Persia has occupied comparatively a small portion of the world's attention, and still less influence in its political councils, thus conveying the impression that she is verging on extinction. This is due in part to the prevailing religion, Mohammedanism, which, at the outset, gave a fresh impulse to the nations that embraced that faith; but in the end it has been this very religion which has antagonized the nations of the Orient with the spirit of modern progress initiated by the invention of printing. Another reason for the obscurity into which Persia has fallen is found in the inaccessibility of that country; although not geographically remote, it is enclosed by lofty and almost inaccessible mountains like a Chinese wall. This obstacle was comparatively slight in former ages, when all the world travelled toilsomely on horseback or in sailing ships. But the invention of steam and the difficulty of laying rail ways to any profit in Persia, owing to the great cost and the thinness of the population, have operated to place her in an eddy at one side of the rush of modern progress.

But at last the turn of Persia has come. No longer can she remain unnoticed and unknown, or continue regardless or independent of what is going on elsewhere.

In spite of herself, in spite of opposing circumstances, she is now looming up into new importance and is becoming the theatre of events destined to be of growing magnitude and weight.

Notwithstanding all that has been written about Persia, the ignorance that still exists about it is so general that there is no absolutely correct map of that country. Until quite recently it was asserted in scientific circles that no fossils existed in its geology. But the fact is that numerous evidences of animal life are now found in the strata of the Persian mountains. I was afforded a curious instance of this ignorance concerning Persia by an English geologist who, in alluding to a scientific lecture on that country, recently heard by him in London, was surprised to learn from me that beds of excellent coal abound in Persia. It is of a bituminous character. The modern discovery of the existence of these coal seams was due to the sagacity of Jenghir Khan, late Minister of Sciences and Arts. There existed a tradition that in early ages the Persians had used mineral coal, and the specific name for it was well known, while all traces of the mines had long been forgotten. As such fuel was a prime necessity for the proper working of the modern machinery of the government arsenal, of which he had charge, Jenghir Khan instituted a diligent search after mineral coal, but without any result. Some time after this, when visiting some lead mines in the heart of the forests of Mazanderan, Jenghir Khan observed that some gypsies encamped in that lonely spot were making fires of a material different from charcoal. On investigation he discovered to his great joy that they were actually burning a fine bituminous coal. But when he inquired where

they found it, they refused to reveal the secret. Neither threats nor rewards availed, and he then placed spies to watch their movements, who eventually succeeded in their efforts. Stimulated by this most valuable discovery, search was repeated elsewhere, and now seams of coal, apparently inexhaustible, are found in several parts of Persia. At Teheran, the capital, it is used for fuel and steam machinery. In Southwestern Persia, near her best ports, the supply of coal is so large that it could very easily be made a very important article of exportation. Lead and iron mines are also found near the coal seams. This is an important fact for the consideration of capitalists, for if ever railways are to be made profitable in Persia, it must be by constructing the rails and rolling stock on the spot.

The present area of Persia is practically divisible into three great parts, distinguished by variety of climate, formation, and products. The west and northwest, comprising the provinces of Azerbaijân, Kurdistân, and Kermanshâh, with minor subdivisions, have a rolling surface that is often broken and mountainous.

The most marked differences are noticeable between the provinces lying north of the great Elburz range and adjacent to the Caspian Sea, and the provinces comprising Central and Southern Persia, which are separated from the former by that range. On the northern side the mountains condense the moisture from the Caspian. Fog, clouds, and rain are frequent. Numerous full-fed streams, abounding in trout and salmon, leap down the gorges of the Elburz and meander across the alluvial slopes that border the sea. This humidity produces a wonderful vegetation. The mule roads wind through a noble

underwood of primeval forests, where the venerable trunks are clothed with the emerald velvet of lush mosses or embraced by the long tendrils of flowering lianas. The green glades opening here and there by the side of the brooks gleam with the scarlet coronal of the pomegranate and the undulating splendor of the wild poppy. Near the sea the woods give place to orchards weighted with fruitage, to vineyards, spacious lawns, and vistas of barley fields, old granges, and thatched huts of the peasantry nestling under superb masses of pendulous foliage by the edge of steaming rice fields, which are lovely to the eye but suggestive of the fever poison that threatens the unwary stranger who exposes himself to the night air.

At Rescht, the chief town and port of this region, the traveller makes preparations for his journey over the mountains to Teheran and Southern Persia. He must go on horseback; if in a hurry he can travel post at the rate of eighty or a hundred miles a day. A special order from the government is essential for this. The stations average four farsákhs,* or sixteen miles apart. On presenting the order to the keeper of the station-house a fresh relay of horses is given the traveller, and after a pipe and a cup of tea from the ever smoking samovar or tea urn, he speeds again on his way at a steady gallop. Of course such a mode of travel is at first very exhausting, and is impossible for the infirm, or for most women. And it is rendered additionally fatiguing because during the greater part of the year one must travel in Persia at night, owing to the heat, and rest in a wretched wayside post-house from eight in the morning

* The farsákhs is the same as the parasang of the "Anabasis."

until five in the afternoon. But one soon becomes accustomed to the hardships of *chappâ* or post-travelling, and finds something very romantic in scaling dark mountain passes or galloping hour after hour over vast solitary wastes with no company but the silent post-boy and attendants, and the eternal constellations which for untold ages have kept watch over the destinies of that grand old empire.

But if one has luggage and a family with him, or prefers to proceed more leisurely, he engages a cook and other attendants, and a *tachtravân* or litter, borne by mules, for the ladies of his family. A drove of mules is also required, and several *charvadârs*, or muleteers, for the luggage. Then the procession commences its slow, winding way towards the pass that must be scaled in order to reach Teheran. A day's journey will be from twenty to twenty-five miles. On leaving a station, the cook is sent in advance to see that the rooms are swept and a meal prepared against our arrival at the next station. Slowly creeping up to the pass day after day, we become aware that we are entering upon scenery so different, that we seem to have passed into another hemisphere. Forests are left behind; and at the summit of the ridge one looks over plains extending with scarcely an interruption six hundred miles. The atmosphere is likewise changed from moist to dry. One is surprised to find that the descent on the southern side of the Elburz range is more gradual and less profound than on the northern side. This is due to the fact that Central Persia is a vast table-land, elevated from four to six thousand feet above the sea. East, west, and south these remarkable steppes roll away like a great sea, quivering with

mirage, and broken at long intervals by islands of verdure, or gray ridges, which rise above the plain like rocky headlands, until the fading horizon melts into the cloudless sky, where the eagle and the vulture soar alone.

Almost the whole of this vast plateau is dependent upon irrigation for the scanty vegetation, which is limited to a comparatively small portion of its extent. This irrigation is, in turn, dependent upon the snows which cover the lofty ranges that appear at convenient intervals above the plains. The importance of these ranges may be judged of by their altitude, which enables them to retain the snow on their summits during the entire year. The chain of the Elburz is in parts over three thousand feet in height; while its central peak, Mt. Demavend, is not less than twenty-one thousand feet in height. The range of the *Zardakooch*, near Ispahan, has a higher average than the Alps.

The soil of this central plateau is capable in many parts of producing rapid and abundant crops under irrigation, especially in the valleys at the foot of the mountains; some tracts are exceptionally fertile. Wherever there is water, the cereals, opium, tobacco, melons, grapes, figs, and, indeed, every variety of vegetable and fruit may be raised. The melons, quinces, and pomegranates are the finest in the world. The wild flowers of Persia are similar to those of Central Europe, but less various than those of North America. Numerous varieties of the aster and the poppy are perhaps the most prominent features of the flora of Persia. The trees which are found indigenous to the country are the plane or *chenâr*, which has always had a mystical character in Persia, and grows to an enormous size, even in dry places,—in the time of

Marco Polo, Persia was sometimes called the Land of the *Arbre Sec*, meaning the plane-tree,—the elm, the poplar, which is greatly cultivated for the wood; the chestnut and the walnut are found in great abundance, also the willow, the sandal-wood tree, and the box-tree. The mulberry of Persia produces the best silk in the world; the pomegranate is so abundant that it grows wild in the forests. In the south of Persia, the date-tree yields large crops; in the southwest there are extensive forests of dwarf oak, but elsewhere the oak is scarce; and one of the singular features of the Persian landscape is the general absence of evergreens. But enormous tracts of Persia, especially in the eastern half of the country, are desolate wastes covered with sand and salt, unprofitable for cultivation, entirely destitute of water, and in parts to be travelled with caution. But it would be a mistake to infer that Central Persia is therefore unattractive. Quite the contrary is the case; in fact, I know of no country which within the same space contains a greater variety or stronger contrasts of scenery. The weary traveller turns with intense pleasure from the road over the arid waste to repose beside the stream, coursing under the clump of darkling foliage nestling in a gorge. And, on the other hand, it is with solemn rapture that he looks over the vast endless spaces; the soul expands with the sense of limits withdrawn, and seems already in this life to gain an intuition of the infinite spaces in which it shall find a fuller expression of its power in a future existence. It is because of these vivid contrasts of Persian scenery that the thoughtful and poetic mind finds it exceedingly fascinating and stimulating to the imagination.

A peculiar feature of this great table-land is the sand-

storms which especially prevail in March, although liable to occur at all seasons. They are most formidable in the southeast province of Kerwan, where an army of twenty thousand men was once overwhelmed and destroyed by such a storm. A sand-blast which I saw in Persia came on with the appearance of an impending thunder-storm, so dreadful in its look that it seemed to threaten a general convulsion of the elements. It approached rapidly, and when within two or three miles the landscape became obscured as if by a cloud-burst of rain. Rapidly it rushed over the plain, while we flew before it for shelter. But when the storm struck us it was accompanied by neither rain nor lightning. But there was a terrific, suffocating cloud of dust careering forward in dense whirlwinds, completely concealing every object at the distance of fifty yards, and the wind was of such fury as to tear off large branches from the trees. Happily these sand storms are not of long duration, and we may travel from one end of Persia to the other without meeting one, just as a mariner may circle the globe and not encounter a breeze strong enough to carry away a studding-sail boom.

There are two objects in a Persian landscape which cannot fail to arrest the traveller's attention and to arouse his curiosity. The villages on the plains are surrounded by lofty square walls, with battlements and towers. At first one fancies every village to be a fortress, and is surprised that such fortifications should be so numerous, and planted in the midst of a flat plain. But he soon learns that these are villages, and towards evening he shall see the flocks and herds wending hither and crowding with loud bleating into the great gate, which,

after their entrance, is closed for the night. Further inspection reveals an irregular huddle of hovels within the walls, constructed of sun-dried mud, and with domical roofs. In summer, these villages are hot as an oven, and but for the density of the mud walls would be insupportable. In such a climate, a dwelling should be either entirely open to invite every breeze, or it should be solidly built, and with scarce any openings, in order to exclude the heat. The fortifications which surround the Persian villages were intended to afford a certain protection against the incursions of the Turkomans, who until recently would steal across the country with silence and speed and carry the people into slavery. The robbers left as quickly as they came, and thus the rude protection the walls gave to the villages was absolutely necessary in a country so sparsely inhabited. But the Turkomans rarely invade the heart of Persia to-day, and the importance of protecting the villages has practically ceased. The custom, however, will probably prevail until some new impulse of progress introduces another system.

The other feature of the scenery of the central plateau to which I alluded, is found in the artificial mounds, which extend at regular intervals for hundreds of miles. These mounds are from sixty to eighty feet high, and resemble the tumuli on the plains of Troy. That they are not tombs or barrows is evident from their position at regular intervals of two miles over a distance of many leagues. That they must be artificial is proved by this regularity of position, while their antiquity must be very great, because the mound-building period was in prehistoric periods, and the Persians themselves can give no facts about their origin, except the general tradition that

they were thrown up in the time of Shah Jemsheed. This is a common phrase in Persia about objects of great antiquity, and simply means that they antedate any precise historical records. The Persians add, however, that these mounds were reared in order to telegraph with bale-fires the invasion of an enemy. This is very plausible, and the tradition may be accepted, since the Persians are too ignorant of comparative history to borrow the idea from other nations, and comparison with the early history of other nations does show that such a means of rapidly communicating tidings was not uncommon. A familiar example is the telegraphing the fall of Troy in one night across the Ægean Sea.

Before leaving this summary of the physical aspects of Persia, it may be of interest to sportsmen and naturalists to learn that the country abounds with game. The trout in the north of Persia are excellent. The salmon at the mouth of the rivers emptying into the Caspian, especially the *Harbaz* and the *Sefeed Rood*, are so numerous that the fisheries are farmed to an Armenian, who within a few years has amassed a fortune of millions. Partridges, quail, pheasants, and hare are everywhere found. Gazelles are often seen on the plains; their meat is exceedingly delicate and toothsome. They are hunted with falcons; a common sight in Persia is the mounted game-keeper, bearing a perch of hooded falcons, exactly as they did in Europe in the days of chivalry. Wild boar are common in the mountains and forests. The Persians hunt them for sport, but never eat them, as they consider pork unclean. This reminds me of an American firm of sausage manufacturers who wrote me to inquire about opening a trade in sausages with Persia. Probably the

article would meet with the same enthusiastic reception there as warming-pans in Cuba or palm-leaf fans at the North Pole. But, on the other hand, the Persians have a superstition that a pig in a stable has a beneficial effect on the horses, and it is not uncommon to keep a hog, or even a wild boar, for this purpose. A savage young boar was presented to me by a Persian gentleman for the stable of the Legation. A European of Teheran had a young boar that always slept by the feet of his favorite riding horse. When the master took a ride the boar followed after like a dog. But one day when they were on the mountains, the boar met some of his own kind and found the companionship so much more congenial than that of horses, that he forsook his equine friend and returned to his native woods. Panthers, wolves, jackals, and tigers abound in the jungles north of Teheran. Last winter was one of exceptional severity, and tigers were several times seen near the city. In the south of Persia lions are still seen, but they are becoming scarce. Venomous serpents are common in dry places, and a certain very disagreeable spider, resembling the tarantula, is altogether too frequent in the country-houses. But accidents from these creeping pests are rare, and the danger from them has been grossly exaggerated by credulous travellers.

The Shah has numerous hunting preserves, and, like many of his predecessors, is a great sportsman. It is partly to this that he owes his continued robust health, after a reign of nearly forty years. It gives him excellent relaxation from the cares of state, which weigh more heavily on kings than people generally imagine. Unlike a minister, a king cannot resign, nor can he, at least at

an Oriental court, lay aside his duties for a while in charge of a regent. The boom of a cannon at sunrise announces to the capital the news that his Majesty is about to start for an excursion beyond the walls. In former ages such an event was announced by a red banner hung on a lofty tower expressly built for that purpose. The Shah has numerous elegant palaces, or pavilions, in the neighborhood, to which he resorts on such occasions, attended by a retinue of courtiers, servants, and soldiers to the number of thousands. When he took his excursion to Mesched, the train included twenty-five thousand people, but part of them were a large military escort. When he does not visit a country palace, numerous tents are required, and an enormous train of mules and camels precedes the king, bearing the tents and baggage for a large encampment. The royal pavilions are of immense size, crimson on the outside, a color which for tents and curtains is reserved for royalty in Persia. The interior of these tents is lined throughout with superb designs in fine needlework, executed by the skilled women of Rescht and Schirâz.

On one of these occasions when the royal camp was by the *Jarge Rood* river, the stream suddenly overflowed its banks. The wives of the Shah rushed affrighted from their tents, and in their anxiety to keep their faces concealed forgot to save their jewelry. An obscure officer of the guards, with that quickness of sight to discover an opportunity which belongs to men of ability in affairs, carefully explored the spot as the waters subsided, and recovered most of the missing jewels. The Shah was so pleased that he promoted the man, who had the address to further ingratiate himself with the Shah until

he rose to be treasurer of the empire, accumulating great wealth and power which have been inherited by his sons.

Nusr-ed-Deen Shah is a courageous hunter. He scales the wildest passes in search of game, and does not recoil when face to face with danger. On one occasion when he was hunting among the tremendous defiles of *Sheristanék*, a large tiger suddenly appeared, and with several rapid bounds placed himself within a few feet of the king and his courtiers. Every one fled in dismay except the Shah and one of his ministers, the Emin-e-Douléh. Taking deliberate aim, the king shot the tiger through the heart. When the danger was past the frightened courtiers returned. The Shah in a good-natured way rallied them on their cowardice, and then added: "Look at my faithful subject, the Emin-e-Douléh! There's a man of courage! he did not desert his king in the moment of peril." But the Emin-e-Douléh, who is one of the shrewdest men in Persia, perceived at once that such praise from his sovereign would arouse jealousy and make him enemies unless counteracted. He therefore quickly replied: "As I am your sacrifice, O Asylum of the Universe, I did not run with the others, because my knees trembled to such a degree that I could not put one foot before the other."

When we come to a consideration of the people of Persia we enter upon a branch of the subject that can only be very inadequately presented within the brief space of an hour. The present population of Persia numbers about nine millions, which, for a long-settled country of such extent, is scanty indeed. There is no reason to believe that the population of Persia proper

was ever much larger than it is now. The vast hosts which she collected in ancient times are liable to mislead us. It should be remembered that great wars in those ages generally depended upon one or two decisive battles instead of numerous indecisive actions as in modern warfare. A large part of the adult male population of the country was gathered on a single field. The defeated army was exterminated, battles being rather a hand-to-hand slaughter than a combination of skilful manœuvres. The battle being lost or won, the war came to a close by the subjugation of the defeated. In addition to this, it should also be considered that Persia depended more on ability than numbers at the outset of her career. Having in this way subjugated the neighboring tribes or nations, she made them provide her with armies commanded by Persian generals, and thus continued to extend her conquests and sway. The present composite character of the population of Persia well indicates what was the character of her people when her empire existed upon a much more extended scale. It is a mistake to speak of all the people of Persia as Persians. They do not do so there; the distinctions between her various races are strongly emphasized. The genuine Persians are of course found throughout the empire, but their original stronghold, and the part where they are still most numerous, is the ancient Iran, now represented by the great central province of Fars and the adjacent districts. Persians use *P* and *F* interchangeably. Hence Ispahân is also pronounced Isfahân, and Fars is also Pars. From Pars comes the term Parsee, which is now applied to the fire-worshippers of India, because they were originally refugees from Persia. In the same fashion the name of

the country, Persia, should really be Parsia, being derived from Pars or Fars. The Persians call themselves Farsee and Iranee.

The Iranees are, as they always have been, a race having no intellectual superior in Asia. The arts, the literature, the philosophy, the poetry, the governing power of Persia have always been in their hands, excepting that at rare intervals the throne has been usurped by men springing from some of the subject races of the country.

The Persians are distinguished from the Turks, and indeed most Asiatic races, by their Aryan origin. That is, they spring from the same stock which gave birth to the Indo-European nations of Europe; the basis of their language is Sanscrit, and has much in common with European languages, especially the Latin. Of course in the progress of ages the Zand or Persian language has undergone many changes, and since the Mohammedan conquest many Arabic words have been incorporated into the literature and the vernacular in use by scholars. But it is worthy of note that the "Shah Nameh," or great epic of the kings, written by Ferdoosee, is almost entirely composed in original Persian. The Persians are a quick-witted, lively, agreeable people, handsome, and of mercurial disposition. They are easy-natured, but their passions are quickly aroused, in which respect they resemble the Latin races. What they were in the earliest periods we know not. But a supplementary chapter to Xenophon's ideal work, the "Cyropædia," shows that two thousand years ago they had already reached an advanced stage of moral corruption. Those who infer that Persia is to-day degenerate on account of the universal corruption which prevails, do not reason correctly.

There is every ground for believing that such a condition has been chronic in Persia for many ages.

Besides the Iranees, or real Persians, who are all at least outwardly Mohammedans, there is a small number, about 25,000, of fire-worshippers, called *Guabres* by the Mohammedan Persians. As the perpetuators of the old cult of the country founded by the immortal Zoroaster, or Zerdusht, these Guabres are the most unmixed descendants and representatives of the race that ruled in the time of Darius that are now to be found. They wear a peculiar garb, of which yellow is a prevailing hue, and, after being persecuted over a thousand years, are now permitted to pursue their avocations in peace. From what I could learn and see, the Guabres have more regard for the precepts of the moral law than other Persians. The famous poem of Thomas Moore, "The Fire-Worshippers," is known to all. But if Moore had looked more carefully into the subject, he would have avoided some of the errors included in that otherwise lovely poem. For example, the death of Hafed, who threw himself into the altar of fire and heroically perished, is undoubtedly very fine as poetry, but it is absurd when applied to one who is represented as a defender of the worship of Zoroaster. In that cult, fire is sacred, and the act which Moore attributes to Hafed is rank sacrilege. It is for the same reason that no fire-worshipper, or Guabre, ever uses tobacco. Not only does he never smoke himself, but to smoke in his presence is not considered quite courteous. I have no doubt that, if the rabid apostles of the anti-tobacco movement were aware of this fact, they would straightway proceed to import a live Guabre into America, to exalt him as a

moral hero, and endeavor, like most doctrinaires, to find in him virtues and qualities of which he never dreamed.

Besides these people, there are also colonies of Armenians and Nestorians in Persia, who represent Christian sects, and have nothing to do with the Persians, or with each other, except in matters of business, although subjects of the Shah; and the same observations apply to the Jews. Each of these bodies numbers about thirty thousand. The American missionaries, who have been fifty years in Persia, are sent to these three classes, as proselyting among Mohammedans is strictly forbidden. Kurdistan, on the west, is a subject province of Persia. Its people make admirable rugs, but there seems to be no other reason for their existence, for they are a turbulent and blood-thirsty race, and have been so ever since Xenophon and the Ten Thousand fought their way through them 2,200 years ago. In the northern part of Persia there are many Turks who are thoroughly identified with Persia, which is indicated by their adoption of the Sheah faith, or the peculiar sect of Mohammedanism which prevails in that country. The present army of Persia is largely recruited from this part of the population, and is therefore well furnished with the best stuff of which soldiers are made, for there never were better troops than those who are of Turkish origin. The Turkish language is prevalent in Northern Persia.

Besides the various subdivisions of the population of Persia already described, we have to mention numerous tribes of nomads, numbering upwards of a million. They are nomadic in character, because their business consists entirely in the care of flocks, and they migrate with the seasons. In winter they live on the plains, and in sum-

mer they move their camps to the mountains. About two fifths of these nomads are divided into numerous distinct clans, each with its own dialect, and generally of a peaceable character. Although rarely of Persian stock, they fully acknowledge allegiance to the Shah, and in time of war furnish many recruits. They are in comfortable circumstances, for their taxes are not excessive, and the butter, textile fabrics, and wool, which they send to the markets, more than cover their moderate wants.

The remaining six hundred thousand nomads of Persia are chiefly Soories and Backtiarees, who pasture their flocks in Central and Western Persia. The Backtiarees are a very large tribe, numbering over four hundred thousand. They are warlike and turbulent, given to brigandage and thieving, and the stranger who goes among them will probably lose his life, and certainly his goods, unless accompanied by an efficient military escort or a royal safeguard addressed to the chief of the tribe. They are very wealthy, and their late chief was a man of great ambition, who gradually accumulated a stock of arms, probably with sinister motives. This gave rise to such suspicions that the Prince Governor of that province, the *Zeti-Sultân*, invited him to become his guest at Ispahân three years ago. Having got the chief in his power, the prince deliberately violated the laws of hospitality by stabbing his guest with his own hand. It is related of this chief that he was in the habit of having a ruby ground to powder and mixing it with a paste in the form of a pill, which he took every morning as a preventive of sickness.

Many traits of the Backtiarees suggest the Indians of our own country. They are cunning and skilful thieves.

Unlike other Mussulmans and Orientals, they name their children after wild animals, such as wolf, tiger, lion, and the like, to which some descriptive epithet is added. Other Persians, when they would name a child, open the Koran at random and take the name that first appears, of the same sex as the child to be named. To this is added sometimes a descriptive epithet, or the name of the father or mother. The consequence is that there is constant repetition of the same names, and one man cannot be distinguished from his neighbor, perhaps, except by an official or an honorary title, or the addition of the name of his birthplace. As, for example, there may be two Mehmet Alees employed in the same family. One perhaps is called Mehmet Alee Nazeer—that is, the steward; and the other is Mehmet Alee Meschedee—that is, native of Meschêd.

The Backtiarees are brave, and at the same time treacherous. A friend of mine, who was travelling among them on official business with a safe-conduct of the Shah, was sitting in his tent at the dead of night. Aware of the character of those people, he had taken precaution to remove every object from the edge of the tent to the centre around the tent pole. All was still; not a sound was to be heard, when suddenly he saw a long arm appear stealthily under the tent, like a snake, groping for something to steal. Raising a heavy club, he brought it down forcibly on the arm. Instantly the arm was withdrawn, but not a groan, nor even a whisper escaped to betray the fact that a man was behind that arm. All was done so quietly that not even the dogs were disturbed!

A Persian dignitary, who was travelling among the

Backtiarees to collect the taxes, was seated in his tent one evening quietly reading. His back was supported by cushions. For a moment he bent forward nearer the light. When he leaned back again the cushions had been removed, and he fell flat on his head with his heels in the air!

Backtiaree thieves have actually taken away the mattress on which a man and his wife were sleeping. The feat was done in this wise. The sleepers having fallen into a deep slumber, the thief has quietly and by great patience laid himself between them. First he touched one slightly and then the other. Each imagined in sleep that his partner was pushing, and thus instinctively and little by little rolled nearer the edge of the bed, which was on the ground. By a frequent gentle repetition of this manœuvre the thief at last succeeded in getting them both on the floor, and then walked off in triumph with the mattress.

As regards the Persians who live in cities and towns, it may be said that their civilization and customs are probably what they have been with little change from a remote period; how remote it is difficult to say. Like the Hindus and Chinese, the Persians claim an antiquity that may be measured only by the imagination; for their legendary history, like that of many people, far antedates authentic history, and the records of Persia that are historic are known to date back fully seven hundred years before the Christian era. The great epic poem of Ferdoosee, which, like Mallory's "King Arthur," or the "Chronicle of the Cid," is an aggregation in permanent epic form of the early legendary records of Persia, is based upon national traditions which undoubtedly had their origin

in actual events lost in the vague mists of a vast antiquity. The chief legends of that remote period relate to wars between the people of Turan or the Tartars and the nation of Iran or Persia, and undoubtedly suggest the migration of races in the cradle of the nations. The reign of Shah Jemsheed doubtless means, not so much a king of that name as a long evolution from a condition of savagery to nascent civilization. Later comes the great Shah Kei Kaous, who was probably an actual character, and his great hero, Rustem, the Lancelot du Lac of Persian legend. The readers of Matthew Arnold's poetry are familiar with the majestic strophes of his tragic poem, "Sohrab and Rustum," in which Rustem engages in mortal combat on the banks of the Oxus, in the presence of two great armies, with his son, Sohrab, whom he had never seen, and who was searching for his father, when he fell by the hand of the hero whose prowess he had inherited. This, which is one of the most magnificent episodes in the whole realm of poetry, was borrowed by Mr. Arnold from Ferdoosee, and paraphrased by him in masterly English.

The people of the settled classes are divided in the most rigid system of rank that was ever devised, although differing from the iron rules of caste as it is in India. The nobility, or those who are connected with the government, form one class.

Next in rank nominally, but practically first, are the mollahs or doctors of the law. Then follows a class of scholars and artists; after them comes the great class of those who are engaged in trade; below them is the class of mechanics, which necessarily includes artisans; and finally there is the numerous class of the peasantry,

which includes many subdivisions. All these classes are equally in the power of the Shah, who can degrade or execute any one at will; all are his slaves, and he in turn is the slave of God. It is not so very long ago since the Shahs of Persia used their tremendous power with awful cruelty and caprice. But under the present Shah there has been an extraordinary progress in this respect; the number of executions at Teheran to-day is little, if any, greater in proportion to the population than at a European capital. Executions no longer take place in presence of the king. He is a man of merciful disposition and of such intelligence that he brought back many enlightened ideas from Europe, while he is continually adding to these ideas by keeping himself well informed of what goes on in the world by reading daily the leading periodicals of the age. But in the provinces one hears occasionally of deeds of blood that remind one of what a tyrant is capable when he chooses. The governors of provinces have the power of life and death. By the Persian laws the *lex talionis* is in full force; the gravest offences may be condoned for money, and the exact amount for each offence is prescribed. Adultery and cognate offences are punishable with death for the second offence, but as in those crimes four witnesses are required, the laws applying to such cases are practically null, and one rarely, if ever, hears of the penalty for them being exacted. In the case of murder the remission of the penalty of death depends on the option of the family of the deceased. The accused is brought into the presence of the judge. If he is condemned, the friends of the other side decide his fate; if they accept gold, he walks forth a free man; but if they thirst for blood, he

is led into the court-yard and is decapitated. Here again the law allows the friends of the murdered man the option of executing the murderer themselves, if they so desire. But at present this option is usually declined. The judicial decisions rendered in such cases are generally just, so far as my observation goes. The Persian sees quickly, and a custom of arriving at swift conclusions enables the Persian judge to form a rapid and correct opinion as to the value of the evidence. Both sides of course perjure themselves without hesitation, if necessary; but from a knowledge of that fact, and an intuitive perception of character and probabilities, the judge forms conclusions that are usually correct.

One of the most prominent cases of great severity seen during this reign was when the Firmâh Firmâh, who is an uncle of the Shah, was governor of the important province of Fars. That region was greatly infested with brigands. Entire villages gave themselves to the business of attacking caravans and infesting the mountain passes. Commerce was actually in danger of stopping from this cause. The Firmâh Firmâh devoted his energies to putting down this scourge. In the course of two years he caused no less than one thousand men to be executed. This seems barbarous; but it was probably the only remedy that could be salutary in such a country, which is thinly peopled and inclined to turbulence, and where the people only respect the law as it shows its power. What has been the result? For twenty years scarce any country has been so safe as Central and Northern Persia. There is no comparison between the safety of the lonely roads of Persia to-day and the robber-haunted defiles of Asia Minor. I would far rather carry a family across Persia than over our Western plains.

Unlike the leading families of Turkey, and of most parts of the East, the nobility of Persia is often hereditary. A man of address or ability is not prevented from rising from the ranks to the highest positions below the throne, but once there it is quite the custom for his descendants to inherit his rank and official position for generations. They live in the manner of feudal lords. They acquire vast landed estates, own many villages, lay out superb pleasure gardens and retreats, and keep large numbers of servants and retainers. The Sedr Azem or present Prime-Minister of Persia is upwards of eighty; he has been in office in various capacities since his fifteenth year. His father was Treasurer of the empire before him. His household numbers not less than two thousand retainers. He goes abroad with a hundred men in his train. This is, perhaps, an extreme case. But men of wealth and position at Teheran who employ from fifty to one hundred servants are common. Many of these retainers get no stated wages, but are fed and clothed, and pick up such vails, commissions, or fees as may come along. They also enjoy more security for themselves and their families by being under the protection of a great man. There is no question that such a large proportion of so small a population devoted to domestic service is a detriment to the country, as they are all consumers and not producers. In former ages, when Persia included in her then vast empire perhaps one hundred and twenty millions of people, she could afford such a system; but it is quite otherwise now. All wealthy Persians keep open house. That is, a gentleman who is travelling always finds ready welcome and unstinted hospitality at houses of the same rank. This

is essential in a country so poorly provided with accommodations for travellers, and does not necessarily imply a generosity superior to our own. Likewise the poor can always obtain bread or a dish of pillau or rice in the kitchen of a wealthy Persian. This is in accordance with the inculcations to charity in the Korân, and is a means of preventing such extreme cases of suffering as we often see among our own poor.

Establishments conducted upon such a scale, of course, imply a complete and elaborate system of etiquette. The major domo, or head of the household, is called the *nazeer*. One of the most important domestics is the *pishketmêt*, who superintends the refreshments, which form a very important element in the visiting arrangements of Persia. In a large establishment he has under him several *chagirds*, or assistants. How carefully every thing relating to this matter is organized, is shown in the event of several guests of equal rank being at the same time seated with the host in the reception-room. In such a case each must be served to the sherbet, tea, coffee, or pipe at the same instant; and, therefore, the number of attendants bearing the refreshments must be equal to that of the guests and the host.

The stables form a very important part of every Persian establishment. Horses are excellent, and not dear. The state required abroad suggests the necessity of many horses, especially as, except in Teheran and neighborhood, this is the only means of locomotion in the country. Few Persian gentlemen have less than six horses; many have fifty to a hundred. This part of the establishment therefore includes the *mirahôr*, or equerry, who takes general charge of the stables, and twice a day measures

out the barley ; the *gilodar*, who rides in advance, and a number of outriders. The hostler is in charge of the feeding and cleaning of the horses, and has an assistant for every four horses beyond the first four. He always sleeps in the stable, and receives the stick if, through his negligence, the horses suffer any injury. The stables are without stalls. The mangers are always niches in the mudwalls, and the horses are tethered to iron spikes in the ground. In winter the horses are very snugly housed, but in summer they munch their hay and barley under the trees in a corner of the garden. While the horses of Persia are very spirited and intelligent, they are far less vicious than American horses. This, I think, is due in part to the fact that they are more in contact with men, and receive many attentions from their keepers that show kindly feeling. The Persians are accustomed to blanket their horses far more warmly than we do. This has frequently aroused the derision of foreigners, who are accustomed to think that Orientals are every way inferior to Europeans. But for many ages the Persians have made a specialty of rearing some of the finest breeds of horses in the world, and, after looking carefully into the question, I have come to the conclusion that they have no superiors in a knowledge of the character and treatment of the horse.

The *mollahs* form the most influential body in the empire. They fill the double office of priests and administrators of the law. In Persia, there are two distinct forms of law : the *Shahr* and the *Urf*. The former is the written code, with the accepted commentaries which, in successive ages, have been grafted upon it. The latter, or the *Urf*, is the law of tradition or precedent ; it is em-

ployed in small affairs or municipal cases, and the judges who try cases under it are like our trial justices. But, in case of doubt or of appeal, the Urf must always give way to the decisions of the Shahr, or written law, of which the word of Mahomet is the final statement. Differences as to the meaning of some of his decrees may, however, be settled by the corroborative decisions of one or more of the Twelve Holy Imams, who were descended from the Prophet. Their decisions are considered by the Sheahs, or Persian Mohammedans, as being an embodiment of great wisdom and authority. The Shahr forms an immense code, going into the utmost details for regulating life, with a minute scale of penalties for each offence. It is exceedingly rich on the subject of the transfer of property and the rights of property-holders, and in regard to all questions arising from the relations of the sexes. Some of its provisions are of the most extraordinary character.

Of course in a complicated system like this there must be different grades of mollahs, or judges; the highest in rank are called *mushtahéds*. The chief mushtahéd of all the Sheah Mussulmans is at Kerbelâh, the shrine where Alee, the son-in-law of the Prophet, is buried, near Bagdad, in Turkey. The chief mushtahéd in Persia must be a pupil of the great mushtahéd of Kerbelâh, who has gathered sanctity and knowledge from communion with the great fountain-head of Persian and Mohammedan law. The present chief mushtahéd of Persia is called Hadji Mollah Alee. His power is enormous, but is generally exercised with moderation and a semblance of humility. He rides abroad with only one attendant, but the Shah himself stands in his presence. When an important

question of law requires the interpretation of the highest legal authority of the land, it is referred to Hadji Mollah Alee, whose decision is final. The method of applying for his opinion is by putting the point at issue briefly, in the form of a supposed case. Hadji Mollah Alee inscribes his decision in the shape of a quotation from the Korân, written diagonally across the upper margin, and adds his seal to it. From that seal there is no appeal. While this great judiciary authority is naturally fanatical and opposed to progress, yet his decisions are generally rendered impartially, and with a careful examination into the possible results that might follow from the decision. In a test case of great importance last year, Hadji Mollah Alee rendered a decision that bore hard against one of the greatest noblemen in Persia, and in favor of certain United States citizens, and neither bribes nor expostulations could induce him to swerve from his decision. But how essential it is that he should be moderate and just is shown by the vast influence he holds over the people. A word from him would bring about war or a massacre of every foreigner in Persia. I asked one of the guards that we were obliged to have at the Legation, what he would do if Hadji Mollah Alee should order him to assassinate me. He coolly replied that while personally he should much prefer to do me no harm, yet that if ordered by Hadji Mollah Alee, he had no option but to obey.

This very large and powerful body of the judiciary and priesthood is supported partly by great estates, donated to them from time to time by men of wealth, and partly by a regular stipend paid by the government. The duties of one of the chief ministers of the Cabinet

are to attend exclusively to the charge of the temporal affairs of the mollahs of Persia.

The scholars and artists of Persia are recruited both from the clergy and the laity. Within a limited range of subjects, the literary and learned men of that country are exceedingly acute. There is a court poet, who composes odes for special occasions. I heard him deliver an ode to the Shah, at the royal audience of the New Year, in a fine sonorous voice. Nusr-ed-Deen himself adds to his other accomplishments a taste for poetry, although he is not so brilliant in this respect as his great-grandfather, Feth Alee Shah. A love for poetry is one of the most marked traits of the Persians to this day. In the tea and coffee-houses not only in the cities but in the villages, it is a common occurrence to hear strophes from the Shah Namêh of Ferdoosee recited to enraptured throngs. As one travels the lonely roads of Persia, he often meets peasants singing strains from Hafiz. The poetry of Omar Khayâm, so well known with us through the fine paraphrases of Fitzgerald, is greatly esteemed by a select few ; but he was a heretic, according to the opinion of the faithful, and to admire his verses in Persia to-day is much as if one were to show enthusiasm in the United States over the writings of Tom Paine. It is impossible at this time to go into an analysis of the different philosophical sects now existing in Persia, whose followers in many cases are identified with the finest literature of the country.

A distinct class of scientific men does not exist in Persia at present as with us. A philosophy of physics that rises above puerility is, one might almost say, foreign to the Oriental mind, although the Saracens and the Per-

sians were in the dark ages leaders in scientific research. The native physicians are sometimes men whose instinct or shrewdness enables them to treat a patient with some success; but they are, for the most part, arrant quacks, usually itinerants, who, after dosing the innocent people of a village with nauseous nostrums, take care to decamp before any of the patients die on their hands. Those who reside in the towns or attend the great are more cautious, for the death of the patient might involve the death of the physician. For this reason they do not themselves compound the medicines in such a case, but give the patient a list of the drugs required, and he sends his servant out to purchase them, and mix them in his presence. Amputations are avoided in Persian surgery, for a fatal result would bring about the death of one of the faithful, and it goes hard in Persia with any one, native or foreigner, who kills one of the faithful even by accident. European physicians resident in that country are beginning to show some boldness in practising surgery, but even they require to exercise caution. The Shah has two European doctors. At Teheran there are nine foreign physicians, including one American, and in other parts of the country are four additional American physicians. There is a medical department connected with the royal college at the capital, whose professors are Europeans. But anatomical studies can only be followed with the manikin, as it is supposed to be contrary to the Korân to dissect the human body.

When we come to a consideration of the artists of Persia, we enter a field so large and important, that we can give only the merest sketch of this part of our subject here. No people has ever been more thoroughly permeated with

an artistic sense of the beautiful than that of Persia, and at different periods this popular taste has been aided by the establishment of institutions for instruction in the various arts under royal patronage. The great Shah Abbas established art schools at Ispahan, sending artists abroad to study, and importing noted artists from India and China. He gave a practical encouragement to the arts by making his capital the most beautiful city in the world. In the terrible invasion of Mahmoud, the Afghân, some of the most beautiful monuments of Ispahan were defaced or destroyed, and in the massacre which attended the capture of the city, the conqueror deliberately caused every artist in Ispahan to be slain. It was at that time that the secret of some of the noblest arts of Persia perished, perhaps never to be revived. But the love of beauty still exists in the hearts of all classes, and the arts are still practised with considerable skill and success. The chief points in Persian art are that it has always been decorative in its character. With the exception of a number of portraits, it would be difficult to mention any works of the Persian artists that were not intended to enter into the decoration of some useful object—a building, a saddle-cloth, a mirror, a water-pipe, an inkstand, or a book-cover. Scarcely an object is made or has been made in Persia, however rude or simple, that did not show an attempt to add to its value by decoration, all of which is and has been without exception done by hand. And this suggests a second great feature of Persian art: its spontaneity. No two objects can be found that are in all respects identical; each object has in it an individuality of its own. The class of decoration in which Persian art has excelled has been, first, in archi-

itecture ; second, in ceramic work, especially glazes. No people have equalled the Persian artists in this respect. Their old mosques are encrusted with iridescent tiles of extraordinary loveliness. The secret of making this iridescence has been lost for ages. The Moors borrowed their architecture, their stucco work, and their iridescent glaze from Persia, and from the same source, perhaps through the Moors, the Italians of the middle ages borrowed their glazes. Metal work, enamels, and textile fabrics, embroideries, and lacquered papier-maché wares represent other important branches in which the arts of Persia have achieved great distinction and success. Each master has made his own colors, in his own way ; and in the case of rugs and embroideries, the artisans themselves dye the wool and silk they use.

The two classes of mechanics and peasants which I have alluded to are, of course, numerous and important, but we can only give a glance at their peculiar traits. Both may be serfs if living in villages, for the villagers of Persia are under the authority of the nobleman who owns the village, and while they rent houses and farms of him, they cannot remove to any other place without his consent. But in practice this usage is losing its force. The lower classes are generally thrifty, and abject indigence is rare and slavery is now abolished.

If it be asked what are the domestic relations of the Persians, the answer is that, of course, polygamy exists, but the lower classes are generally satisfied with one wife at a time. Divorce is easy, constantly practised, and attended with no disgrace. A man has simply to say three times in succession to his wife, "You are divorced," and both are free. It is required, however, that he should have

some show of reason for such a course. She can marry again, but he retains her property. But there is a law of Persia which allows a woman to marry for any stated period, up to ninety or a hundred years. The conditions are that the amount of her portion be mentioned in the contract, and that during the period named she cannot be divorced, and thus cannot be deprived of her dowry. The wives, of course, live in great seclusion in the towns. In the country the necessities of the daily life of the poor give them more freedom. A Persian lady is married at eleven or twelve, and after that is seen by no man but her husband and her father and brothers. No male outside of her family may inquire about her health, or make her a topic of conversation. She goes to school when a child, but her education is limited. The quarter of the dwelling she occupies is on a separate court; it is called the *anderoon*, and is never overlooked by another house. The husband retires to the *anderoon* after his day's work is over, and is not accessible until he comes forth in the morning.

A great deal of sympathy has been bestowed upon the lot of Oriental women; it is very far from being my intention to say a word in favor of a system which tends to withdraw the fairest portion of the human race from the admiring devotion of the rougher sex. But when it comes to a question of pitying their lot, honesty requires us to admit that they bestow as much pity on our women as we do on theirs. Their system has existed three thousand years or more, and seems to them quite as satisfactory as our system does to us, and probably more so. Notwithstanding the restrictions under which they live, the women wield enormous influence, and are by far the

more important of the two sexes in Persia. They are obliged to go veiled in the streets, but this enables them to go where they please without discovery. Muffled in that mantle and veil not even her own mother can recognize a woman. Her own husband, whatever he may suspect, dares not touch her veil in the street. To do so is death. I knew of two Europeans who lifted the veil of a woman. The next instant they were both cut down by the infuriated bystanders. There was no redress. They had violated one of the fundamental customs of the East. The Shah's wives never ride abroad except with the streets cleared, and no one must look on them. A European general, employed as instructor in the Persian army, was unable to escape into a side street as the procession of the royal wives came by. He turned, face to the wall, and being something of a wag, saluted them by waving his hand behind his back. An attaché of the English Legation, in peeping over a wall to see the Shah's wives, contrived to knock a small bit of plaster off the wall, which fell on the cover of one of the carriages in which those ladies were riding. The incident was reported to the Shah, who gave the young Englishman just forty-eight hours to get over the frontier, and he went.

A French gentleman, living at Teheran, incautiously married a Persian woman. A mob stormed the house where he was; he escaped by lowering himself with a rope from the rear wall, and seeking refuge in a mosque, where he immediately abjured Christianity, and by turning Mussulman was permitted to live and have the woman, who had also been hidden during the riot. His children are Persians, and he himself is thus an exile from Europe.

A Persian woman was the cause of an emeute at Teheran forty-five years ago, in which the Russian Legation was stormed, and the minister, with all his family and suite, to the number of forty, were massacred. A Persian woman was again the originating cause of the difficulties which brought about the war between Great Britain and Persia in 1857.

The ladies of Teheran visit each other frequently, and find much entertainment and consolation by frequenting the public steam-baths, which at certain hours are reserved for them. These are a sort of ideal club for the Persian women, where they compare notes after the bath, embroidering and smoking the *kalian* or water-pipe, while all the gossip of the neighborhood and many domestic secrets are discussed. Often the most important transactions are conducted to a successful issue by the skilful intervention and persistent pleading of the women. Does a man wish to influence another, he does not depend on doing it directly if the case is difficult, but sends his wife or wives—in such a case the more the better,—who persuade the wives or the favorite wife of the other man to plead in behalf of husband number one. The raising of a loan, the settlement of a bargain, the life of a criminal, the solution of an important affair of state—almost any transaction, in fact, may be, and usually is, finally arranged in Persia by the intervention of feminine diplomacy. The ladies of Persia are the power behind the throne, as they are in every other part of the world. Fortunately for the other sex, they do not always fully realize what power they have, or the distribution of influence would be even more unequal than it is now. Notwithstanding the limited education of most of the women

of Persia, they are naturally bright and intelligent, and many cases are on record in which great and enduring affection has attended the conjugal relation. The story of the love of Chosrû and Shireen, which has been a theme for the poets and artists of Persia for ages, is founded on actual facts in the history of that great monarch. The sister of the present Shah and his aunt are women of great intelligence and considerable culture. Nusr-ed-Deen Shah, although a polygamist, has had fewer wives than most of his predecessors, and has been sincerely attached to two of them. The first favorite was a peasant girl, who was reaping in the fields when he was passing on a hunting expedition. She had the ready address to allow the king to catch a glimpse of her handsome features as he passed. As a result, she was promoted to the palace, and held a controlling influence over him until her death. She was the mother of the oldest and most talented of the king's sons. The present favorite, who has the title of Anisé-e-Douléh, or Favorite of the Kingdom, is a woman who has been described by those who know her well as possessed of great force of character, of winning amiability of manner, excellent heart, and remarkable tact and feminine diplomacy. For fifteen years she has held a beneficent sway over Nusr-ed-Deen Shah, without any apparent diminution of her power.

The Shah has three sons and several daughters. The eldest son, called the Zeli Sultân, is hereditary prince, governor of the great central provinces, whose capital is Ispahan. He is a man of fine administrative ability, a firm will, and great ambition; but these qualities are tarnished by profound craft and dissimulation, and an inclination to malignant cruelty, resembling that of too

many Oriental tyrants. He looks every inch a king, but, although the eldest son, the law of primogeniture does not apply in his case, as his mother was of plebeian origin. The Shah, conscious of the precarious condition of Persia so long as Russia maintains her menacing aspect on the northern frontier, would gladly prefer to see the Zeli Sultân succeed to the throne, as he is opposed to Russia, and would be able, with his force of character and his friendship to England, to present a bold front to foreign aggression. The Zeli Sultan will probably contest the succession on the death of his father. The second son of the Shah, called the Valy-a-hed, is the Crown Prince, and, as such, governs the northwestern province of Azerbaijan. Not having seen him, I can only speak of him from hearsay. He seems to be a well-dispositioned man, whose qualities are negative rather than positive. He has shown some administrative ability. The youngest son, called the Naïb Sultanéh, is an amiable young man, who holds the two positions of Minister of War and Administrator of Teheran, the capital. He has fine manners, speaks French and German, and entertains very elegantly in European style.

As regards the future of Persia, it is of course difficult to speak, except in conjectural terms. It is hardly fair to form an estimate of her powers at this juncture, for she is in a transitional state, laboring to pass from the old to the new, to emerge from the chrysalis state of ancient laws and customs to the new splendor with which she may once more dazzle the nations. There are some, especially the enemies of Persia, who assert that she is even now practically a vassal of Russia, who only has to raise her arm to crush the prostrate nation, and destroy

the lingering remains of life forever. But this view does not seem to be justified by the facts. Unlike some other Oriental races, unlike the ephemeral tribal Khanates of Khiva, of Bokhara, or Afghanistân, Persia possesses a power of continued organization, recuperative resources, and national vitality that has never been equalled by any other nation. Time and again has she fallen, apparently to rise no more; time and again has she risen from her ashes more superb and majestic than ever. Russia may threaten, she may even for a time perhaps succeed in controlling Persia, but not permanently; for, sooner or later, this grand old people is sure to re-assert itself once more. What strengthens the position of the empire of Persia is the fact that England cannot see her crushed with safety to her Indian possessions, which would then be menaced from the Persian Gulf, while the German empire is seeking to develop for its manufactures an outlet in Central Asia through Persia, there being no passage through Russia, where free transit is forbidden. Prince Bismarck also foresees that the continued integrity of Persia is becoming essential to Germany in the continental war that cannot be deferred much longer. Guided by German officers, and aided by German arms and gold, the Persian army, composed of excellent material of war, would make short work of the vast possessions that Russia has recently acquired in Central Asia. In these observations I express no individual preferences regarding any of the powers joining in the general scramble to divide the spoils of Asia, but have only attempted to give a sketch of the situation as it appears to an impartial observer. There seems to be good reason, therefore, to hope that the Persian empire may continue to exist

for ages to come. Progress in an old country must necessarily be slow, but he who denies that Persia is following a forward and upward road has but very imperfectly studied the present condition of affairs in that country. Wars, convulsions, struggles, she must yet undergo. It is, alas, by hard struggling that any thing worth having is won in this world. But she will, in the end, emerge to a new day, and renewed influence and power are in store for the Land of the Lion and the Sun.